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JOURNEY TO THE EAST
PART 4 OF 4
#16
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SONIC UNIVERSE™
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Tracy Yardley!
Hunzeker

Welcome to the planet Mobius—a world beyond what you know from the SEGA games! Sonic and his friends have traveled to the Dragon Kingdom to weaken the Iron Dominion from abroad! Now they come face-to-face with the traitor to the Chaotix – Espio!
MILES "TAILS" PROWER SONIC'S SIDEKICK
SALLY ACORN DISPLACED PRINCESS
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG HERO OF MOBIUS
MONKEY KHAN CYBORG SIMIAN
YOU!
ESPIO THE CHAMELEON EX-CHAOTIX MEMBER
Part Four: Journey to the East
A World Under Constant Vigil
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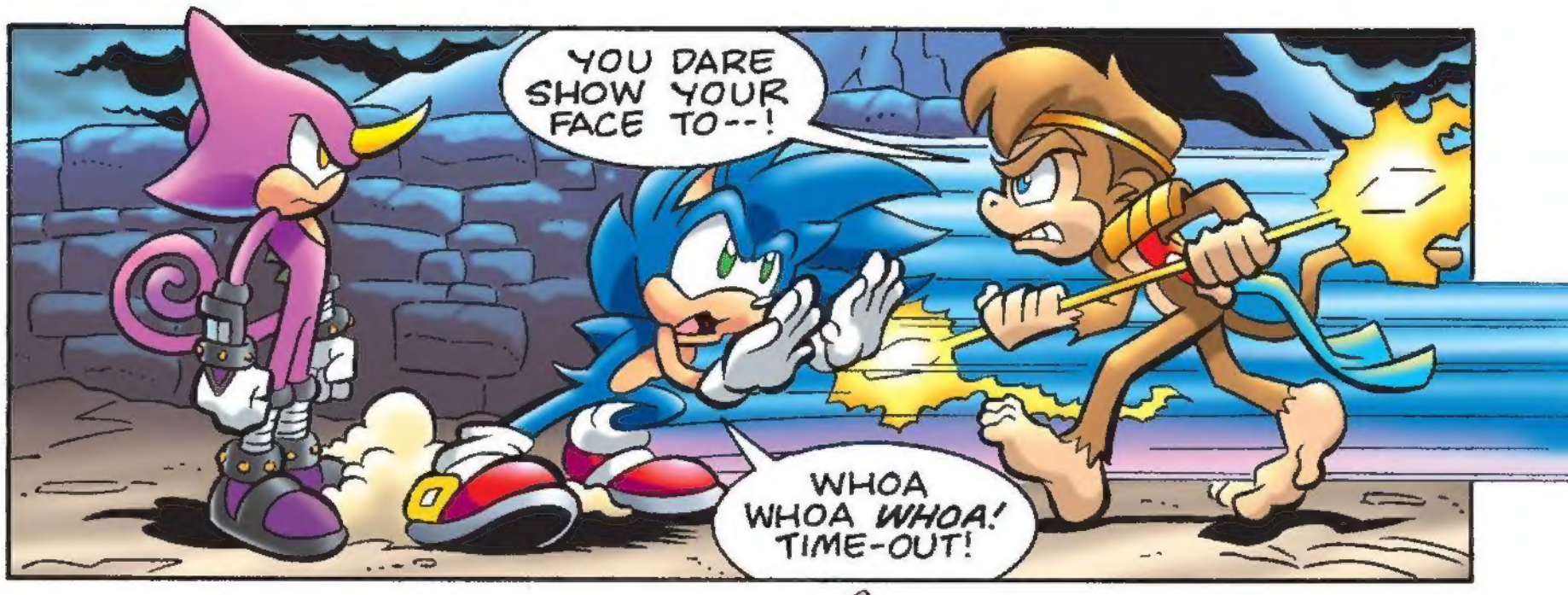

YOU DARE SHOW YOUR FACE TO--!
WHOA WHOA *WHOA!* TIME-OUT!

HE'S A TRAITOR TO YOU AND TO HIS TEAM!
AND HE'S BEEN A FRIEND FOR MUCH LONGER.

HE ATTACKED YOU! HE PUNCHED YOU IN THE *FACE!*
YEAH, HE DID. YOU AND I HAVE GOTTEN INTO THREE TIMES AS MANY FIGHTS. BY THAT LOGIC, I SHOULD BE STOMPING YOU INTO THE DIRT.

FINE. HAVE IT YOUR WAY.
I USUALLY DO.

First you go soft on Robotnik, now this guy...

KEN RAISES A GOOD POINT, THOUGH.

YOU'VE MADE IT CLEAR YOU'RE IN WITH THE IRON DOMINION. WHY ARE YOU HERE NOW?

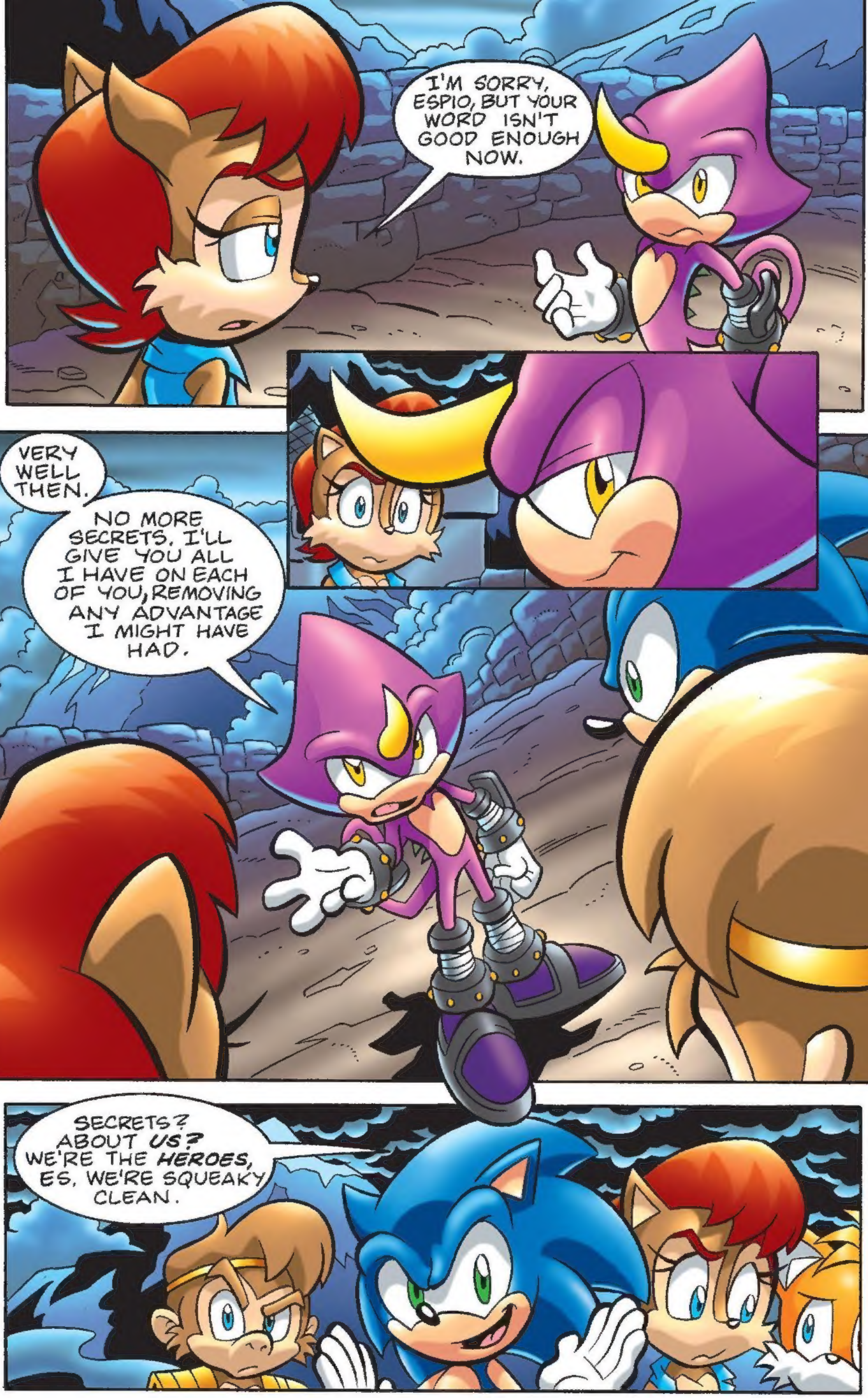
I DON'T WANT TO DEBATE SEMANTICS, BUT I *AM* WITH THE SHINOBI CLAN. I AM ONLY WITH THE IRON DOMINION THROUGH... EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

KNUCKLES MENTIONED SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES* BUT HE WASN'T SURE WHAT YOU MEANT.

I AM NOT PERMITTED TO SAY MUCH, BUT MY CLAN LEADER IS WILLING TO REVEAL EVERYTHING.

*HINTS WERE DROPPED IN STH #204!

THE BRIDE OF CONSTANT VIGIL HAS BEEN OBSERVING YOUR EFFORTS IN TRYING TO DISMANTLE THE CLAN OF FOUR HOUSES. I VOLUNTEERED TO GUIDE YOU TO A MEETING WITH HER.


I'M SORRY, ESPIO, BUT YOUR WORD ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH NOW.
VERY WELL THEN.
NO MORE SECRETS. I'LL GIVE YOU ALL I HAVE ON EACH OF YOU, REMOVING ANY ADVANTAGE I MIGHT HAVE HAD.
SECRETS? ABOUT *US*? WE'RE THE *HEROES*, ES. WE'RE SQUEAKY CLEAN.

BUT IF YOU THINK THAT WILL WARM US UP TO YOU, FINE. HIT ME WITH YOUR WORST.

"THE SNEAK".*
*STH#97

THAT WAS A ONE TIME THING... JUST FOR LAUGHS...
...HOW DID YOU EVEN...?

I HAVEN'T BEEN A FREEDOM FIGHTER VERY LONG. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME?

"CAPTAIN SUPER FOX-MAN."**
**TAILS MINI-SERIES

NOBODY WAS SUPPOSED TO READ THAT! I WAS JUST A KID-- MORE OF A KID!

WELL?
THE LOCATION OF YOUR ROYAL BIRTHMARK.

WHEN ELIAS CAME BACK, I HAD TO VERIFY HIS CLAIM, SO...
NO, NO. WE WON'T SPEAK OF IT FURTHER.

CAN WE SKIP ME AND GO BACK TO SALLY?
NO. FOR YOU, I'M AFRAID I CAN ONLY CONFIRM THERE ARE OTHER KHANS.

NO, THERE AREN'T. I WAS AN ONLY CHILD, AND I KNOW HOW MY PARENTS DIED.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

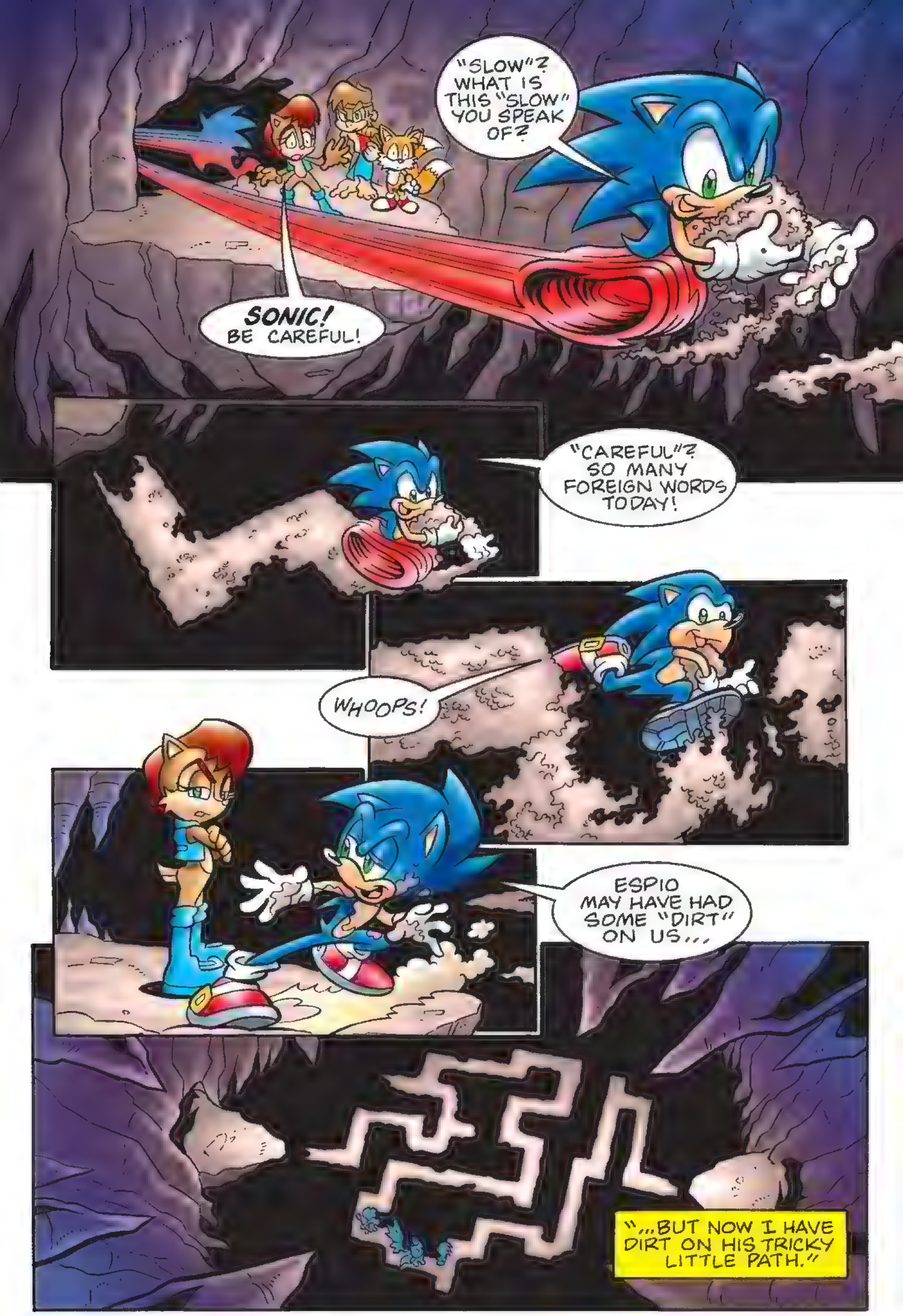
IT'S A PRETTY COMMON FAMILY NAME. I'M SURE THERE'S LOTS OF OTHER KHANS OUT THERE.
NOT FAMILIES! YOU! OTHERS LIKE YOU!

WHAT OTHERS LIKE ME?! I WAS THE ONLY ONE ROBOTNIK MANAGED TO--!
EASY THERE, MONKEY-BOY. WE'VE STILL GOT A CONTINENT TO LIBERATE AND A CITY TO RESCUE, REMEMBER?
SO YOU'VE PROVED YOU'VE GOT DIRT ON ALL OF US. WHAT MAKES YOU THINK WE TRUST YOU ANY MORE NOW?
INFORMATION IS EVERYTHING WITHIN MY CLAN. I HAVE LEFT MYSELF ENTIRELY PRONE TO YOU. THE FACT I KNOW ANY OF THESE THINGS JUST COMES FROM DOING MY JOB.
WHICH IS WHAT?
AS I SAID, THE BRIDE OF MY CLAN WILL REVEAL ALL. PLEASE ACCEPT THESE BLIND-FOLDS SO I MAY TAKE YOU TO OUR SECRET HEADQUARTERS.
ALL RIGHT, ESPIO. WE'LL FOLLOW YOUR LEAD FOR NOW.
THANK YOU, PRINCESS. I PROMISE YOU WON'T REGRET IT.

LATER...
IT'S BAD ENOUGH WE'RE GOING SO SLOW, BUT I CAN SAFELY SAY I'M TOTALLY LOST NOW.
GOOD. THAT WAS THE POINT.
WELCOME TO THE WAY OF THE BLIND. YOU WILL FIND MY MASTER IF YOU CAN REACH THE OTHER SIDE.

OKAY, COOL--
WAIT! WHAT DO YOU MEAN "IF"?!
I'M SORRY. THIS IS OUR WAY.
ESPIO, WAIT--!
Hmph. NINJA.
DON'T WORRY, SONIC, I CAN FLY US ACROSS!
NO, YOU CAN'T...

I'VE HAD SOME DEALINGS WITH THE SHINOBI CLAN. THEY'RE EXPERTS IN HIDING TRAPS IN PLAIN SIGHT.
AND I ALMOST FLEW INTO THAT!
"WAY OF THE BLIND." INVISIBLE OBJECTS... Hmmm...
THINK YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING, SAL?
I THOUGHT SO!
THERE'S A HIDDEN PATHWAY LEADING ACROSS THE CHASM.
BUT I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS. IT'S UNDOUBTEDLY A MAZE OR LADEN WITH TRAPS... IF WE TAKE IT SLOW, MAYBE WE CAN--


"SLOW"? WHAT IS THIS "SLOW" YOU SPEAK OF?
SONIC! BE CAREFUL!
"CAREFUL"? SO MANY FOREIGN WORDS TODAY!
WHOOPS!
ESPIO MAY HAVE HAD SOME "DIRT" ON US...
"...BUT NOW I HAVE DIRT ON HIS TRICKY LITTLE PATH."

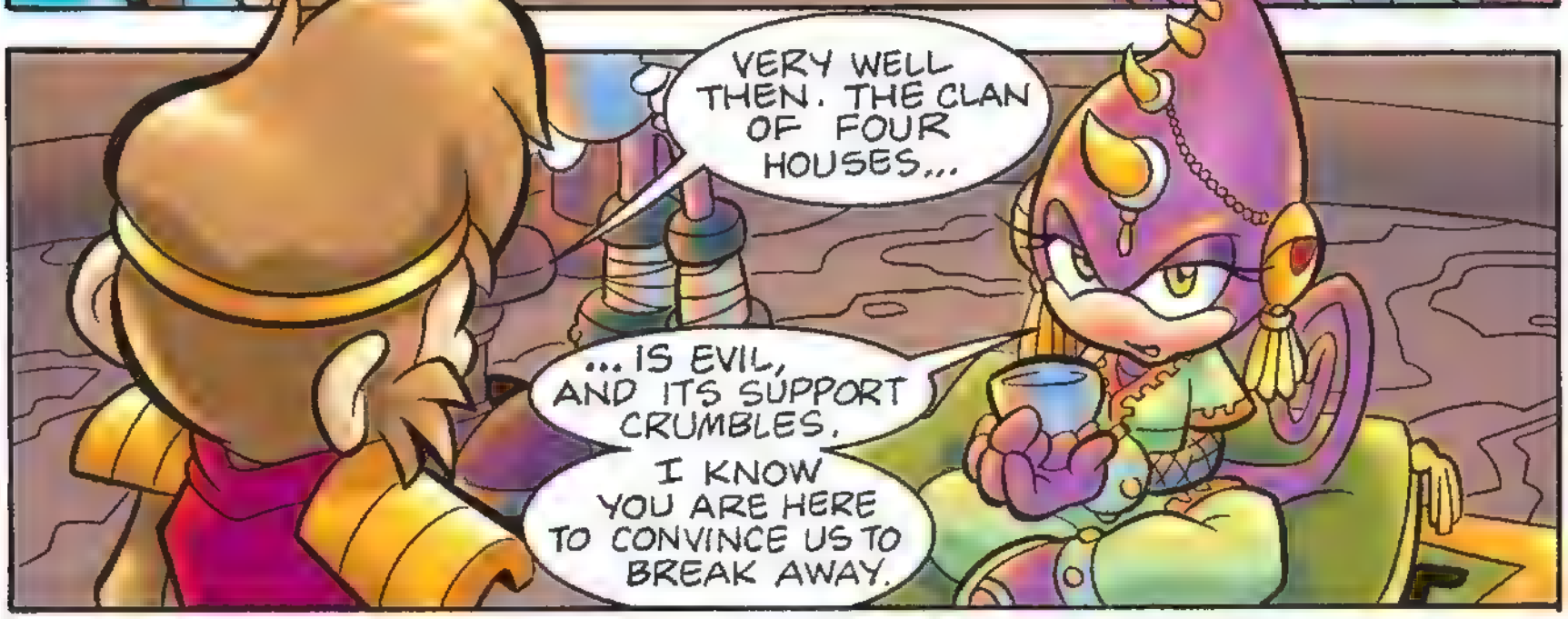
I NEVER KNEW YOU TO PLAY DIRTY, HEDGEHOG.
LEAVE THE JOKES TO THOSE OF US WITH THE WIT, MONKEY-BOY.

WE'RE ABOUT TO MEET THE LAST LEADER OF THIS REGION. YOU CAN'T GO IN LOOKING LIKE THAT!
EVERYBODY'S A CRITIC!

OKAY FOLKS--FOCUS. WE'VE OVERCOME THEIR FIRST CHALLENGE. LET'S BE READY FOR ANYTHING.

YOUR TREPIDATION IS UNNECESSARY. COME IN AND WE WILL SPEAK PLAINLY.

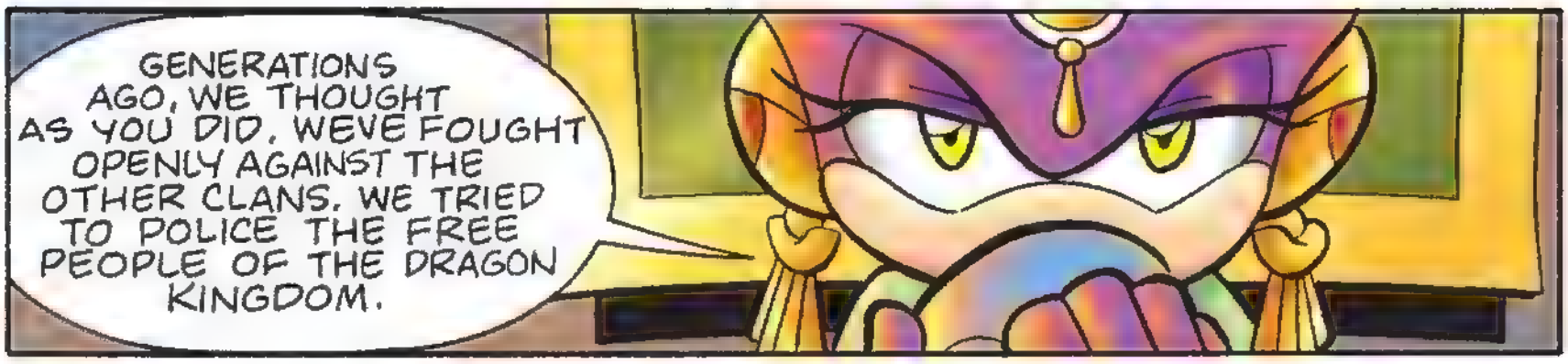
THANK YOU FOR SEEING US. I AM...
YOU CAN FOREGO THE HONORIFICS, PRINCESS. I AM WELL AWARE OF WHO YOU ARE.


VERY WELL THEN. THE CLAN OF FOUR HOUSES...
...IS EVIL, AND ITS SUPPORT CRUMBLES.
I KNOW YOU ARE HERE TO CONVINCE US TO BREAK AWAY.

I LIKE YOUR DIRECTNESS, LADY. SO? WILL YOU DROP THE IRON JERKS?
YES, YOU HAVE MY WORD OF HONOR. THE CLAN OF FOUR HOUSES IS NO MORE.

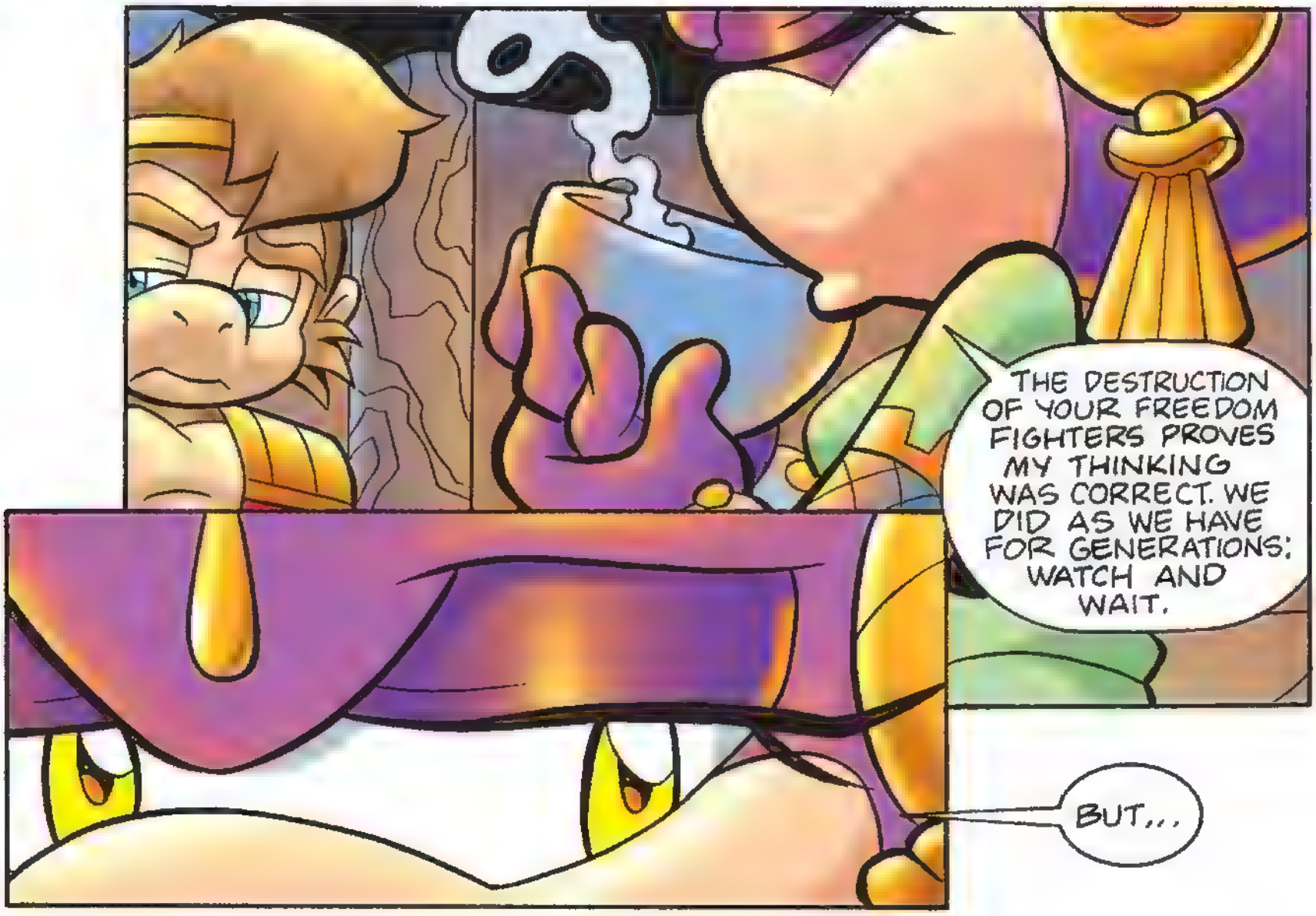
SWEET! THAT WAS EASY. THANKS FOR YOUR TIME. WE KNOW THE WAY OUT.
WAIT JUST A MINUTE!

YOU CAN'T LET IT BE SIMPLE, CAN YOU?
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE!
WE SPENT DAYS TRAVELING HERE AND RISKING OUR LIVES TO CONVINCE EACH CLAN'S BRIDE!
YOU HAD TO LEAVE YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS BEHIND IN THE HANDS OF THOSE MONSTERS! AND THE DRAGON KINGDOM FREEDOM FIGHTERS--!
KEN? TAKE A MINUTE.
I'VE HEARD THE SHINOBI CLAN CALL THEMSELVES THE PROTECTORS OF THESE LANDS.
IF THAT'S TRUE, WHY DIDN'T YOU HELP US FIGHT? WHY DID YOU SIDE WITH THE IRON DOMINION?


GENERATIONS AGO, WE THOUGHT AS YOU DID. WEVE FOUGHT OPENLY AGAINST THE OTHER CLANS. WE TRIED TO POLICE THE FREE PEOPLE OF THE DRAGON KINGDOM.

WE WERE NEARLY WIPED OUT FOR OUR EFFORTS, SO WE ADOPTED OUR SHADOWY WAYS TO SURVIVE. WE LEARNED TO DO MORE WITH LESS.

THE SHINOBI CLAN IS SMALL. IF WE HAD CHOSEN TO STAND AND FIGHT, THE IRON DOMINION AND ITS ENSLAVED HOUSES WOULD HAVE WIPED US OUT ONCE AND FOR ALL.


THE DESTRUCTION OF YOUR FREEDOM FIGHTERS PROVES MY THINKING WAS CORRECT. WE DID AS WE HAVE FOR GENERATIONS: WATCH AND WAIT.
BUT...

SOMETIMES ACTION MUST BE TAKEN.
ESPIO HAS SHOWN ME THIS BY DEVIATING SO GREATLY FROM HIS MISSION.
WHAT MISSION?
WE ALL THOUGHT HE WAS A NATIVE TO ANGEL ISLAND.
WELL... WITH YOUR PERMISSION?
SPEAK.
I WAS THE MOST RECENT SENT TO MONITOR THE GUARDIAN OF ANGEL ISLAND.

YOU MEAN YOU WERE SPYING ON KNUCKLES THIS WHOLE TIME?

MORE OR LESS.

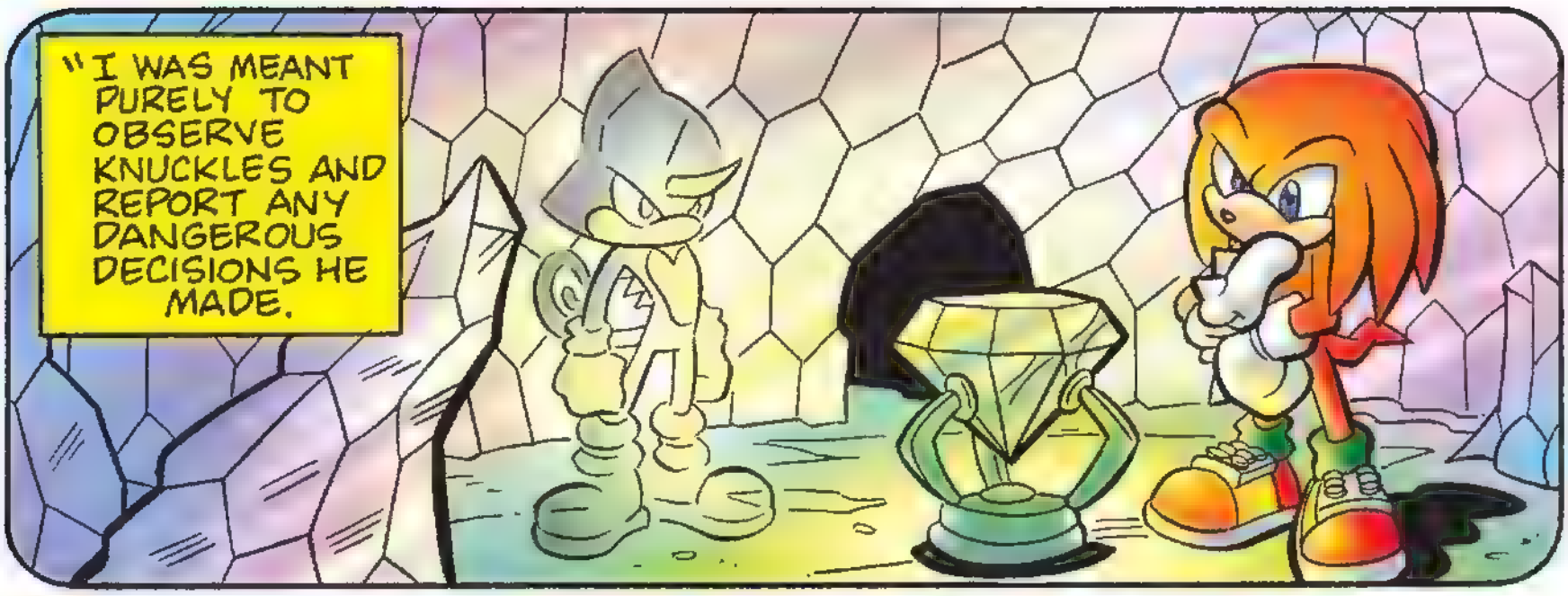
KNUCKLES COMES FROM A LONG LINE OF GUARDIANS CALLED THE "BROTHERHOOD." THE BROTHERHOOD TOOK IT UPON THEMSELVES TO MONITOR MOBIUS FOR THREATS AGAINST ANGEL ISLAND.

MY CLAN DIDN'T THINK SUCH A POWERFUL, SPECIES-CENTRIC ORGANIZATION SHOULD GO UNCHECKED.

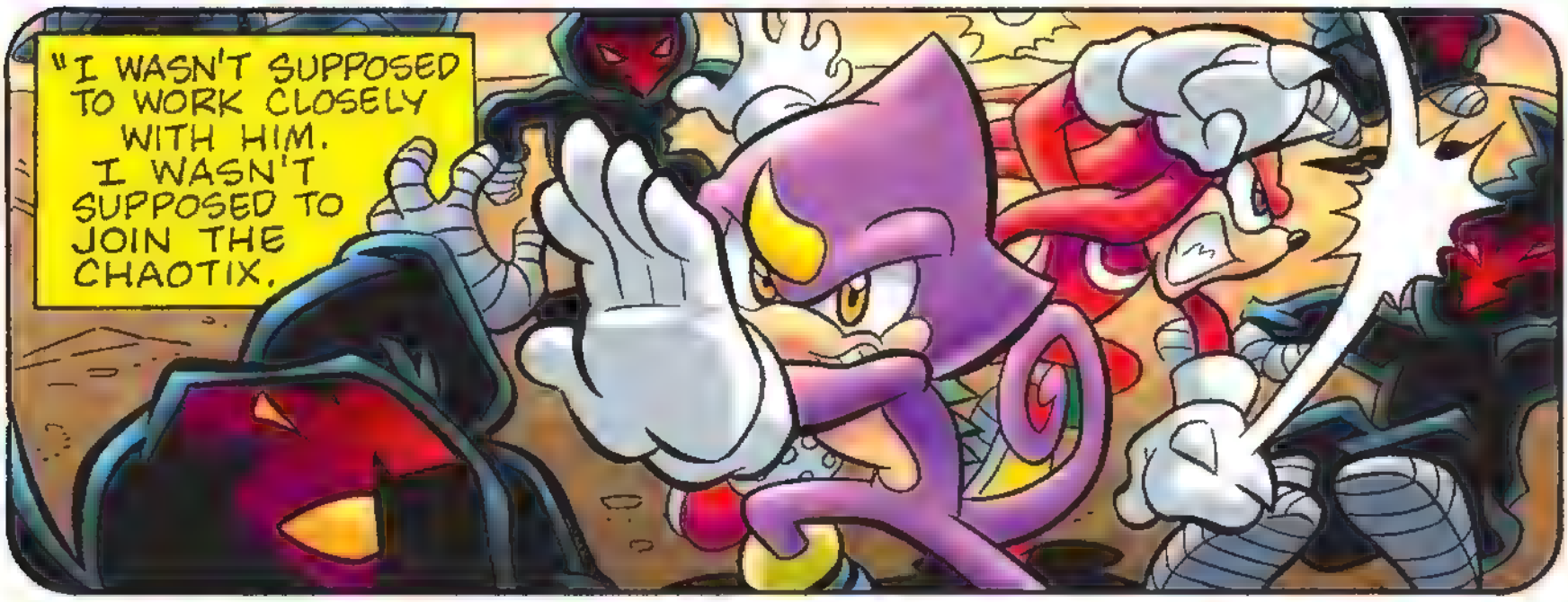
EACH GENERATION, ONE OF US IS CHOSEN TO KEEP TRACK OF THE ACTIVE GUARDIAN TO PROTECT MOBIUS.

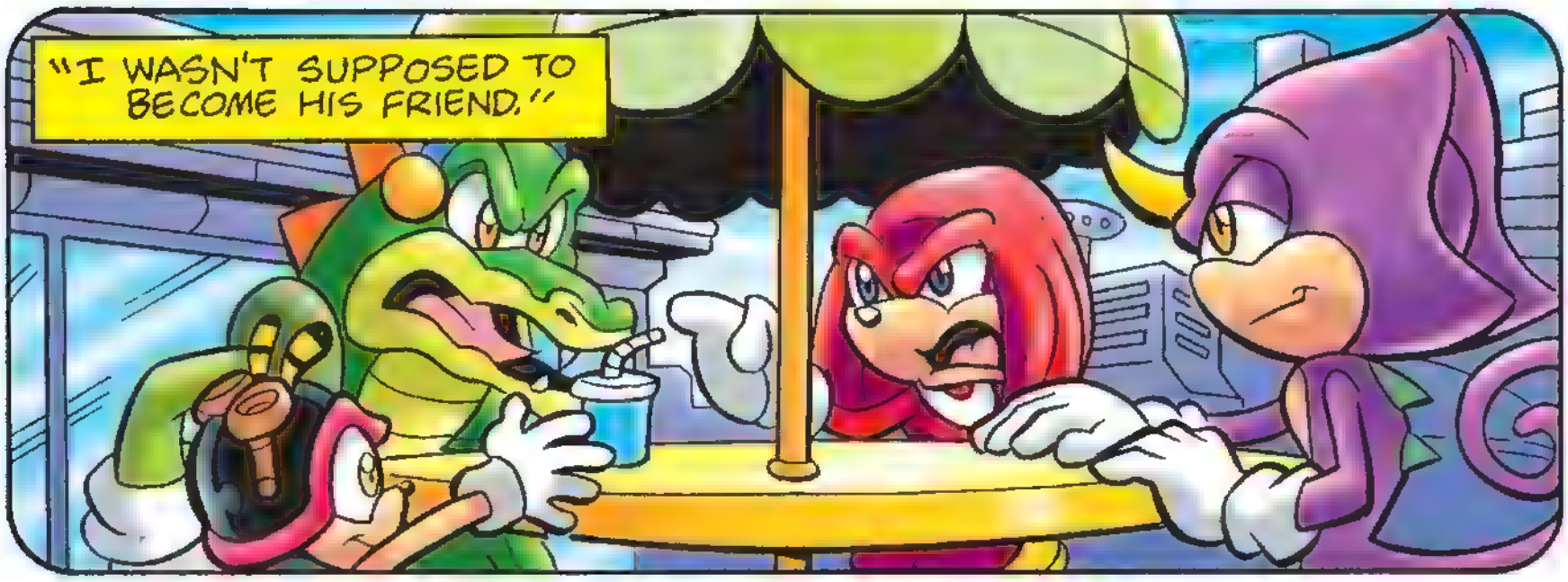
"MY MENTOR WAS VALDEZ. HE WAS MONITORING GUARDIAN LOCKE AND HIS DEALINGS WITH THE KINGDOM OF ACORN.

"HE HELPED ME SETTLE IN RAINBOW VALLEY AND BUILD MY IDENTITY AS JUST ANOTHER LOCAL."


"I WAS MEANT PURELY TO OBSERVE KNUCKLES AND REPORT ANY DANGEROUS DECISIONS HE MADE.

"I WAS ONLY ALLOWED TO REVEAL MYSELF IF THE SITUATION WAS DIRE--SUCH AS WHEN DR. ROBOTNIK CAPTURED YOU ALL ON ANGEL ISLAND.*
*SEE THE CLASSIC TALE IN SONIC SELECT VOL.2


"I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH HIM. I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO JOIN THE CHAOTIX.


"I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BECOME HIS FRIEND."

ESPIO HAS BROKEN THE TABOO OF HIS STATION, BUT I CANNOT IGNORE THAT IT HAS BEEN THE RIGHT CHOICE.
WH-WHAT?

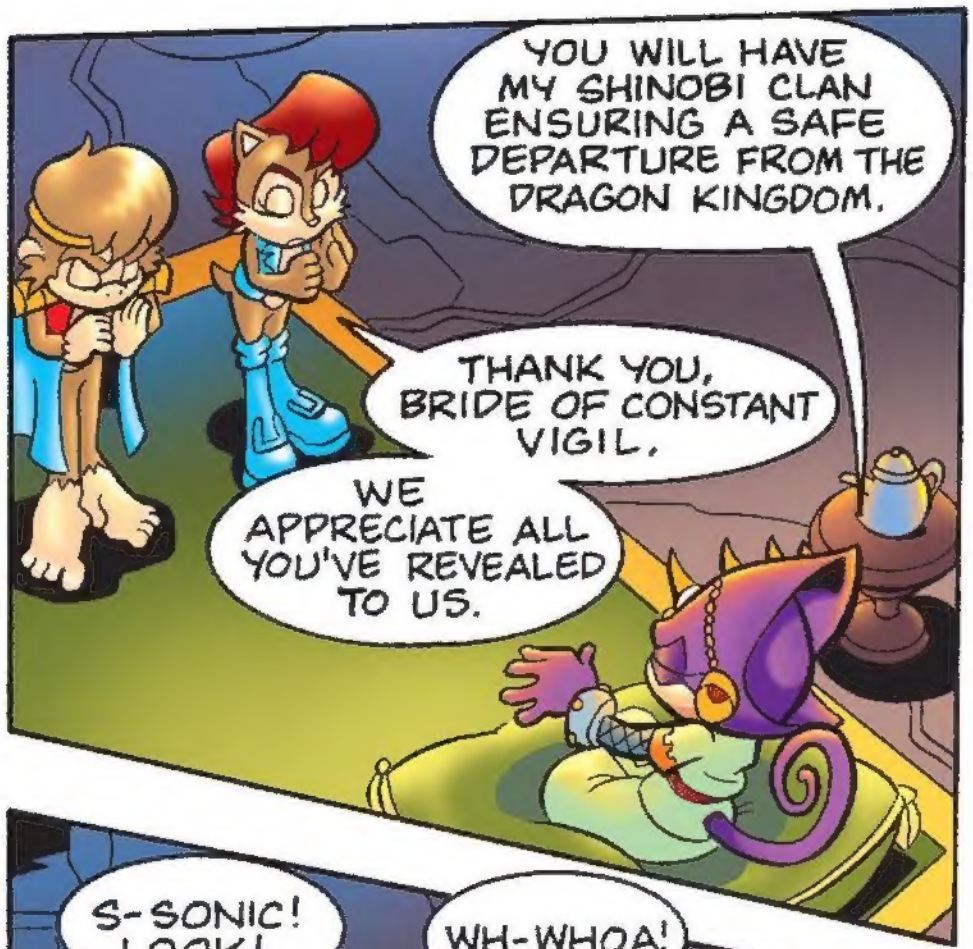
I ORDER YOU TO RETURN TO YOUR STATION ON ANGEL ISLAND. YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO ACT FREELY AND AS YOU SEE FIT.
REALLY?! I CAN?! I--YOU--JUST--
YES!
THANK YOU, MO--

≡AHEM≡ MASTER.
PLEASE EXCUSE MY OUTBURST.

BEFORE YOU GO, RETRIEVE THE MYSTICAL FAN OF FEN XING AND BRING IT TO NEW MOBOTROPOLIS. YOUR FRIENDS WILL NEED ITS POWER.
AT ONCE.

SEE YOU BACK IN THE CITY!
YOU BETTER. YOU'RE WAY BEHIND ON YOUR HEROISM QUOTA.

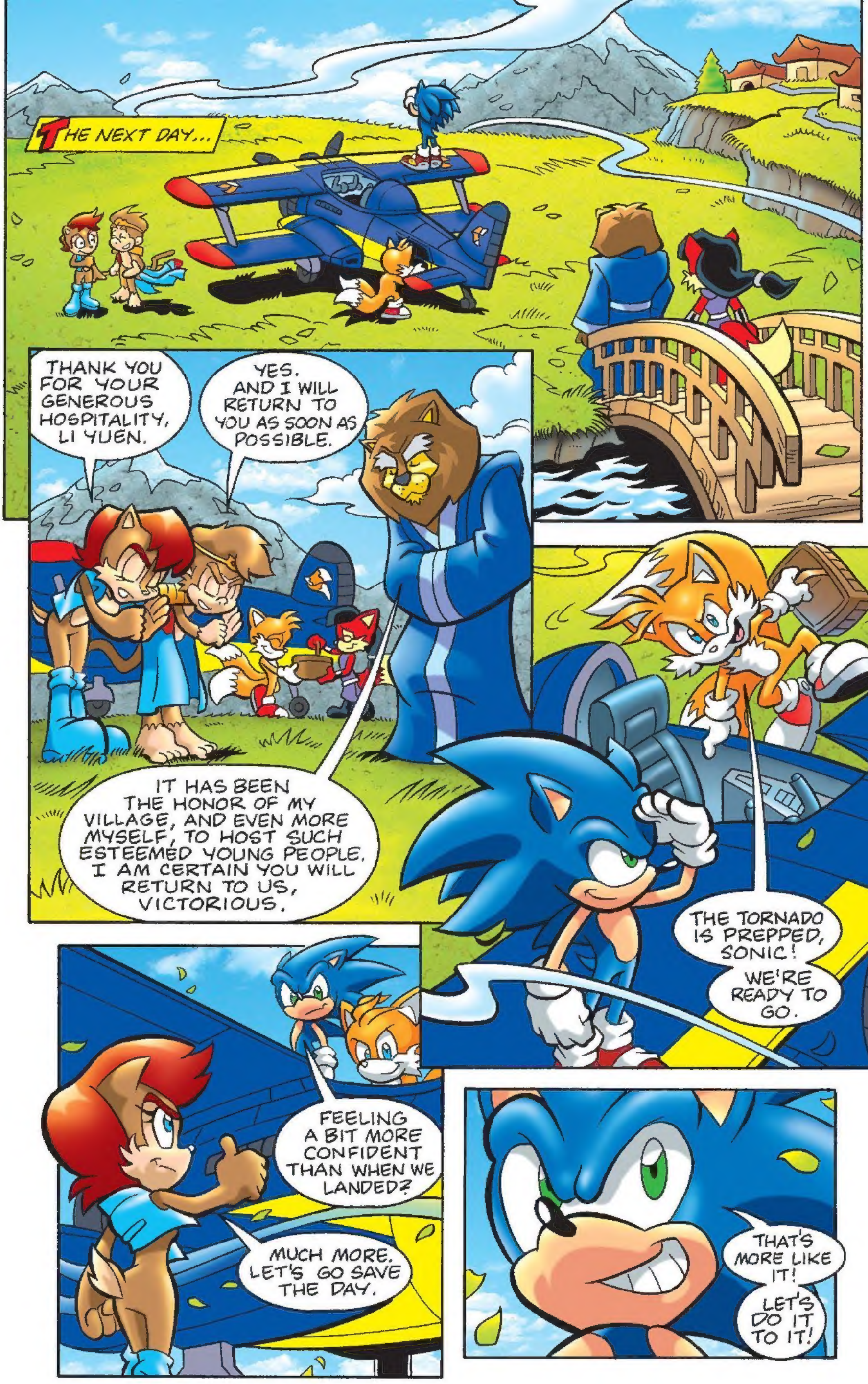
YOU MAY HAVE BROKEN THE CLAN OF THE FOUR HOUSES, BUT YOUR WORK HAS JUST BEGUN--
--KING OF THE FREE PEOPLE.
I KNOW.
SSSSZAP
WITH THIS CROWN, I SWEAR I WILL DO MY BEST TO BOTH PROTECT MY PEOPLE AND TO HONOR THE AUTHORITY OF THE CLANS. YOU HAVE MY WORD OF HONOR.
I JUST HOPE I CAN LIVE UP TO THE HYPE.
I KNOW YOU WILL.


YOU WILL HAVE MY SHINOBI CLAN ENSURING A SAFE DEPARTURE FROM THE DRAGON KINGDOM.
THANK YOU, BRIDE OF CONSTANT VIGIL.
WE APPRECIATE ALL YOU'VE REVEALED TO US.

ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN SPARE THE EXTRA MUSCLE?
I MEAN, YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE GUARDS IN HERE.
OH?
DID YOU TRULY BELIEVE I WOULD LEAVE MYSELF TOTALLY PRONE TO SUCH POWERFUL OUTSIDERS?

S-SONIC! LOOK!
WH-WHOA!
OKAY, I ADMIT IT...

...THAT'S PRETTY COOL!


THE NEXT DAY...
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS HOSPITALITY, LI YUEN.
YES. AND I WILL RETURN TO YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
IT HAS BEEN THE HONOR OF MY VILLAGE, AND EVEN MORE MYSELF, TO HOST SUCH ESTEEMED YOUNG PEOPLE. I AM CERTAIN YOU WILL RETURN TO US, VICTORIOUS.
THE TORNADO IS PREPPED, SONIC!
WE'RE READY TO GO.
FEELING A BIT MORE CONFIDENT THAN WHEN WE LANDED?
MUCH MORE. LET'S GO SAVE THE DAY.
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!
LET'S DO IT TO IT!

NEXT STOP-- NEW MOBOTROPOLIS!
HANG ON, FREEDOM FIGHTERS, THE CAVALRY IS ON THE WAY!
The adventure continues in Sonic the Hedgehog #210!
Next time in SONIC UNIVERSE: Tails finds "Trouble In Paradise!"

MY SONIC UNIVERSE™ FAN ART

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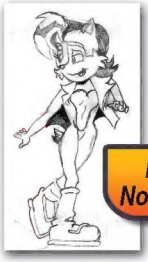

Kirsten D.
North Carolina

FAN FUNNIES!

by Marlon L. from Florida

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OFF PANEL Journey to the East

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SONIC UNIVERSE, No. 16, July, 2010. Published monthly by Archie Comic Publications, Inc., 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543-2318. Jonathan Goldwater, Co-CEO, Nancy Silberkleit, Co-CEO, Victor Gorelick, Co-President, Fred Mausser, Co-President. Single copies $2.99. Subscription rate: $35.88 for 12 issues. All Canadian orders payable in U.S. funds. SEGA, Sonic The Hedgehog, and all related characters and indicia are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA CORPORATION © 1991-2010. SEGA CORPORATION and SONICTEAM, LTD./SEGA CORPORATION © 1991-2010. All Rights Reserved. The product is manufactured under license from Sega of America, Inc., 350 Rhode Island Street, Ste 400, San Francisco, CA 94103 www.sega.com. Any similarities between characters, names, persons, and/or institutions in this book and any living, dead, or fictional characters, names, persons, and/or institutions are not intended and if they exist, are purely coincidental. Periodicals postage pending at the post office at Mamaroneck, New York and at additional mailing offices. Title registered in U.S. patent office. POSTMASTER, send address changes to SONIC UNIVERSE, c/o Archie Comic Publications, Inc., 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543-2318. Printed by Worldcolor Press, Inc., Montreal, QC, Canada. SU#16/12-MAY-10

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